What's the big deal about Assessments?

Understanding the assessment process and how "getting it right" can make both the team process and outcomes for individuals more positive and effective.

What is assessment?

Assessment is an ongoing process aimed at understanding the current status of an individual in order to design and provide services and supports necessary to improve the individual's quality of life.

What does assessment involve?

Assessment involves gathering, analyzing, and interpreting evidence obtained from:

- Observation
- Interviews
- Historical documents
- Program and anecdotal data
- Professional evaluations
- Testing

Why is assessment important?

1). Assessment is the foundation of decision making; and

2). The regulations¹ say you have to.

¹ State Operations Manual Appendix J - Guidance to Surveyors: Intermediate Care Facilities for Persons With Mental Retardation. Retrieved from http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/Downloads/som107ap_j_intermcare.pdf

What do the regulations say?

Most regulations require assessment (i.e., admission and discharge decisions, sufficient numbers of staff, etc.).

Assessments are primarily related to the comprehensive functional assessment (CFA) at the following W-tag numbers:

W-Tag Numbers

W210 – Assessments must be accurate and reflective of the current status and needs of the individual and can serve as a functional basis for an IPP to be developed.

W211 – Consider the individual's chronological age and implications for active treatment at each stage.

W212 – Identify presenting problems, disabilities, and when possible, their causes. Diagnoses are based on relevant, objective, and accurate data.

W-Tag Numbers

W213 – Identify specific developmental strengths, including preferences, methods of coping, compensation, friendships and positive attributes in functional terms.

W214 – Identify specific developmental and behavioral management needs in functional terms.

W215 – Identify needs for services without regard to the actual availability of the services needed.

The CFA must include assessment of the following:

- W216 Physical development and health
- W217 Nutritional status
- W218 Sensorimotor development
- W219 Affective development
- W220 Speech and language development
- W221 Auditory functioning
- W222 Cognitive development
- W223 Social development
- W224 Adaptive behaviors
- W225 Vocational skills as applicable

Re-assessment

W259 states the CFA of each individual must be reviewed by the IDT for relevancy and updated as needed. The review of the CFA occurs sooner than annually when indicated by the needs of the individual.

Myths & Misconceptions

Myth: "It's not necessary, we know this person."

Fact: People change (e.g., successful desensitization plans, medication reductions, etc.).

Myth: "A standardized tool is <u>ALWAYS</u> sufficient to meet regulatory requirements."

Fact: It depends on the detail of the tool, how it is used, and supplemental information.

Questions to ask yourself

Is the tool appropriate for the individual?

Does the tool provide comprehensive information regarding the individual's strengths and needs in specific functional terms?

Was the assessment conducted in the appropriate environment?

Was the assessment conducted by the appropriate person/people?

Were observations conducted to ensure accuracy?

Were the individual's physical limitations, the environment, and equipment taken into consideration?

Send us your comments or questions at fsb@dhw.idaho.gov